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ABSTRACT

Wright State University, Ohio, has developed an undergraduate degree in Middle Childhood Education with extensive content preparation and initial field experiences. Participants complete an undergraduate program in two specialized areas accompanied by 15 hours of teacher education professional coursework and field experiences in urban and suburban practicums. Students move on to a post-baccalaureate program that fully immerses them in middle school environments and provides them with licensure. Teachers are prepared to vary teaching and learning experiences as appropriate and use assessment and evaluation strategies that promote young adolescents' learning. The program educates future middle school teachers about the philosophical underpinnings and places them in middle schools exemplifying these principles. The program begins during the summer with four academic courses on campus and one field experience. Interns start the fall term in classrooms where they will spend the academic year. University classes begin the third week. Some classes are held within the public schools. Interns are rotated through specials classes and through all K-12 grade levels. Throughout the year, they teach every day, and during the summer, they complete their electronic PRAXIS portfolio. The master's degree is awarded after successful execution of an inquiry project and demonstration of successful classroom teaching. (SM)

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Preparing Middle School Teachers: Using Collaborative Middle School Field Experiences

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Cincinnati OH,
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Abstract

Teacher preparation programs have spent the last few years wrestling with meeting the new Ohio requirements for Middle Childhood Level Licensure. This has been challenging for many reasons including the need to prepare preservice teachers in two content areas while providing field experiences in middle level schools. At Wright State University, we have developed an undergraduate degree in Middle Childhood Education with extensive content preparation and initial field experiences. Our students then enter a graduate program where they are fully immersed in middle school environments. This session will describe our program and solicit feedback from middle level educators about enhancing students' field experiences through collaboration with schools.

Introduction

The purpose of Wright State University's (WSU) Middle Childhood Level (MCL) Program is to prepare highly qualified middle grade educators skilled in guiding and motivating in young adolescents to learn. These future MCL educators first complete a rigorous undergraduate program in two specialized areas (Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics and/or Science) accompanied by 15 hours of Teacher Education Professional coursework and field experiences in urban and suburban practicum experiences in MCL school settings. The Teacher Education Professional Phase I classes, provide the undergraduate with an introduction to the total ecology of schools with a focus on MCL education. Over the course of the six field experiences (two undergraduate, four graduate level), students have a grades 4 – 6 classroom experience and a 7 – 9 experience as well as placements in their two content areas in urban and suburban schools.

The post-baccalaureate program is designed to provide MCL educators with licensure. Incoming non-WSU graduate students take courses comparable to the Phase I learning experiences described above during Summer A term. Starting Summer B term, students complete the program taking specifically developed coursework as well as a year-long MCL internship. Interns develop knowledge, dispositions and performances aligned with National Middle School Association (NMSA) and other appropriate learned society standards in addition to the four Pathwise/PRAXIS domains and 19 assessment criteria. The interns' teaching preparedness and proficiency is documented in a MCL Professional Educator's Portfolio and with a research inquiry project.

The professional literature in education provides the underlying philosophy and rationale for WSU's MCL teacher preparation program. The knowledge base from MNSA and other associated organizations indicates that MCL, a significant and complicated developmental age, must have teachers who are appropriately prepared and knowledgeable in both content and working with young adolescents.

Students in the MCL years experience maturation and unique growth needs, which must be addressed in the middle school setting to ensure student success. The following summary of the NMSA position paper, *This We Believe*, (1995) is the underlying philosophy of the WSU Middle Childhood Level Teacher Preparation Program:

- Young people undergo...rapid and profound personal changes from ages 10-15.
- Early Adolescence is a period of tremendous variability among youngsters of the same gender and chronological age.
- Growth is common in all areas of development - intellectual, physical, social, emotional and moral...individual differences proliferate.

- Young adolescents reveal growing capacity for conceptualization for considering more than a single idea at a time, and for planing steps to carry out their own learning.
- Students benefits from learning systematic approaches to creative thinking and problem solving.
- However, because cognitive growth occurs gradually, most Middle Childhood Level students require ongoing concrete, experiential learning in order to develop intellectually.
- Concerns about appearance and body changes usually generate heightened interest in personal grooming.
- Their health practices are often inappropriate, especially in meeting the nutritional needs of changing bodies.
- Young adolescents search for personal identity.

NMSA also states that developmentally appropriate middle schools promote programs that actively assist young people in formulating the moral principles upon which they may ground their lives. Likewise, the primary goal MCL programs should be a commitment to young adolescents. At WSU this MCL teacher preparation program goals: embrace a shared united vision and middle school philosophy; set high expectations for all; serve as adult advocates for their students; foster family and community partnerships; have flexible organization; have policies that foster health, wellness and safety; insure comprehensive guidance and support services for all students; and ensure a positive climate for learning. In addition, the curriculum within the school should be challenging, integrative and exploratory. Teachers are prepared to vary teaching and learning experiences as appropriate as well as use assessment and evaluate strategies that promote young adolescents' learning.

The second respected organization that built their Middle Childhood Level philosophy on empirical documentation, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (1990), summarized that MCL Education should:

- Create a community for learning.
- Teach a core of common knowledge (critical thinking and healthy lifestyles).
- Young adolescents must be healthy to learn.
- Ensure success for all students (cooperative learning not tracking).
- Families and Middle Schools must be allied through trust and respect.
- Responsibility for Middle Childhood Level student success should be shared between schools and community.
- Provide flexible scheduling (Blocks of time, joint planning by teachers).
- Empower teachers and administrators.

The third source for this knowledge base is Stevensen (1991) who concludes from Caweli's study for the American Society for Curriculum Development (ASCD) that positive Middle Schools use teacher-advisor format, provides transitions and articulates activities, use interdisciplinary teaching and activities and continually expose teachers to teaching strategies appropriate to

adolescent students. In 1992, ASCD synthesized research on student desires for MCL teachers. Young adolescent students desired teachers:

- Who can be respected and someone they can believe in.
- Who are fair and trust-worthy.
- Who create psychological safety.
- Who have a sense of humor.
- Who listen to students perceptions, interpretations and concerns.
- Who are willing to negotiate without abdicating appropriate authority.
- Who communicates humanly and rationally.
- Who clarify where the line is drawn and the consequences for violations. Valuing order and consistency.

WSU's MCL program is designed to educate future MCL educators about the philosophical underpinnings as well as place them in Middle Schools exemplifying these principles. Thus the Middle Childhood Level Program focuses on:

- A dual specialized liberal arts undergraduate education.
- A strong psychological and sociological understanding of adolescents to best serve the needs of Middle Childhood Level students insuring these young people an opportunity to develop respect for diversity and an awareness of the changing American Society.
- In-depth involvement in Middle School environments, including rich experiences with appropriate MCL curriculum and instructional methodologies.
- Integrated and specialized methods coursework as well as a strong exposure to reading methodology.
- An undergraduate exposure to schooling and an intense graduate practicum in MCL Professional Development Schools.
- An understanding and ability to effectively use technology.
- A respect for and desire to inquiry and research to sustain success in renewal and reform.

Collaborative Efforts in Providing Appropriate Middle School Field Experiences

Following proven NSMA guidelines such as those set forth in On Site: Preparing Middle Level Teachers Through Field Experiences (Butler, Davies, & Dickinson, 1991), we have provided for early initial field experiences as well as extensive year-long middle school experiences in a variety of settings.
We likewise believe that WSU's Teacher Education Department must work with the MCL Professional Development Schools to guarantee actualization of the principles stated above. If we provide our students with high quality classroom experiences with effective middle level teachers in middle school sites, we can better prepare them to work with young adolescent students. Our ideal is to provide our preservice teachers with content knowledge of two subject areas as well as a fully developed sense of how to reach and teach middle school students.

The graduate MCL licensure program is modeled after the Professional Educator Program (PEP) which successfully prepared returning graduate students in elementary and secondary certification areas from 1992-2002. The

PEP was the product of collaborative college-public school efforts and membership in John Goodlad's National Network for Educational Renewal and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Relationships with the above organizations served as a factor in the college becoming one of 18 college and university partners in the Teacher Education initiative of its National Center for Innovation (NCI-EN).

Both programs, past and present use the medical school model that permits a select group of post baccalaureate students to practice the art and science of teaching in a clinical environment. The strength of the program is that the interns experience the total ecology of the school beginning the summer prior to and concluding the summer following the school year. The interns earn teaching licensure in 15 months. WSU students enter the program with an undergraduate degree in Middle Childhood Education with two content areas.

The program consists of student interns who are housed in public schools. The interns are individuals who have undergraduate degrees and who have enjoyed professional success in the military, business, and other careers. Schoolteachers who voluntarily complete a workshop serve as clinical faculty members in partnership with WSU. The clinical faculty provide a learning laboratory that is rich in problem solving and collaborative teaching and learning opportunities. As discussed in Ramey and Cole (1999), every effort is made to place interns with well prepared, seasoned clinical faculty who serve as mentors to supervise the interns in cohort groups and demonstrate dynamic teaching. As a result, public school students in grades 4 – 9 gain from the fluid and cooperative interaction of professional educator interns, clinical faculty, and other school personnel (Cole and Ramey, 2000).

Field Program Overview

A. Summer

The MCL Program begins during the summer. Four academic courses are offered on campus with one field experience. For the academic course, the interns attend three classes everyday for the first five weeks of the term. The second five weeks interns work all morning daily in year-round schools (not in the school district where they will spend the school year). They return to the university for one class in the afternoon (two days a week). The three academic courses: ED 606 Reading & Literacy Instruction I, Middle Childhood Level; ED 622 Technological Instruction & Integrated Methods: Middle Level; ED 732 Principles and Practices of Middle Childhood Level Education are team taught by university faculty. An authentic assessment requirement (The Professional Portfolio) due at the completion of the school year is introduced.

Before beginning fall term, the district requests state temporary substitute teaching certificates. These certificates permit interns to cover class if the lead teacher is involved in renewal projects as well as for liability reasons. The school site advisory councils decided to permit interns to substitute in the lead teacher's classroom if the interns were in the field on the day of the teacher's absence and if it did not interfere with university course requirements.

B. Fall

The interns start fall term in the classrooms where they will spend the academic year. By having no university responsibilities, interns become

acclimated into the 'total ecology of the school'. University classes begin the third week and some classes are held at public school buildings. The interns take five courses.

The elementary intern field experience is enhanced by a rotation schedule developed by the district elementary lead teachers, which provided exposure to a variety of "specials." Included in the rotation are all special education classes, including MH, DH, LD, and SLD, in addition to Speech, Gifted, Art, Music, Physical Education, and Chapter I. Elementary Interns are also exposed to various age levels within the elementary building site.

During the first two weeks of December, when the university class work is completed, a rotation schedule, more extensive than the elementary rotation was implemented throughout the school. Believing that the interns benefit from exposure to all student age levels, elementary interns are required to visit kindergarten, junior, and senior high classrooms. Secondary interns at the junior high are placed at the senior high for three days, and conversely the interns placed at the senior high are switched to the junior high for three days.

A unique feature to the junior and senior high alternative field placement is the student shadowing experience. Each intern is assigned a public school student to follow throughout the course of a typical school day. This provides much needed one on one attention to the individual public school students.

The remainder of the December field experience is spent in the original intern field placements. Advisory Councils at all buildings thought this to be an invaluable opportunity to orient interns into the typical "holiday craziness" all schools experience before Winter break.

C. Winter

Winter term, the interns have three full day of field experience (Attachment A). Some university courses, like that of fall, are held at school sites.

The interns have the week between winter and spring terms, referred to as Clinical Field Experience II, to plan and research their full time internship teaching. Beginning with the first week of spring term, interns teach everyday, all day. Variations can and do occur such as some interns make plans to team-teach.

D. Summer

During the first five-week session of summer school, interns put the finishing touches on their professional electronic PRAXIS portfolio (as mentioned previously), by taking ED 645 Internship Assessment. The second summer class required ED 646 Design of Induction Year Project, assists interns in inquiry topics for their upcoming entry year of teaching. Although interns received certification by successfully completing the coursework and internships, the master's degree is awarded only after the successful execution of the inquiry project as well as demonstration of successful classroom teaching. The final project serves as accountability of the research, classroom teaching or related work fulfilling the instruction requirement. By keeping in contact during the interns' induction year, a support channel is provided.

Overview of PRAXIS/Pathwise

In an effort to assure Ohio students, parents and communities that the state's teaching force has the necessary knowledge base and proficiency to adequately address students' needs, the State of Ohio has determined to use The

PRAXIS SERIES: Professional Assessments for Beginning Teachers. This series constitutes a system designed to assess the skills of beginning teachers. While one component of the PRAXIS SERIES, the PRAXIS II: Subject Assessments, is intended to assess prospective teachers' depth and knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical principles, newly adopted state licensure standards mandate a performance-based evaluation of teaching skills from within the context of a specific classroom setting. The PRAXIS III is a complementary assessment developed with this specific context in mind. Founded upon the basic assumptions that effective teaching requires both action and decision making and that learning is a process of active knowledge construction, the assessment was developed to reflect both the art and science of teaching. Moreover, it was designed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to be a reliable and valid measure of teaching performance likely to meet the rigors of subsequent legal challenges. The PRAXIS III criteria were derived from a national research base with input from 2,000 educators from diverse backgrounds from across the country. It was developed for use in teacher licensing decisions made by states or local agencies empowered to license teachers and was not designed for the purpose of employment decisions. As such, the intent of ETS was from the outset to develop a national consensus on the important aspects of teaching and to translate that consensus into a framework for decision-making which is both informed by theoretical and policy perspectives of both educators and researchers.

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National Middle Childhood Level Association. (1995). This we believe: Developmentally responsive middle level schools. Columbus, Ohio: NMSA.

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Candidate Course of Studies with Required Courses Indicated
Preparation for Middle Childhood Level Licensure
Bachelors Degree Program Requirements*
***Students entering the program with an Undergraduate Degree will have transcripts evaluated to determine if courses are roughly equivalent to required WSU teacher preparation course work.**

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD LEVEL
Undergraduate Pre-Professional Program

Middle Childhood Level BS Ed. Degree Without Licensure
Listing of the general education, foundation curriculum and discipline area concentration course requirements for the bachelors degree follows.

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS			46 qtr cr hr
AREA I:	ENG 101-102	Freshman Composition	8
	MTH 143	Quantitative Reasoning	4
AREA II:	HST 101, 102, 103	Western World	9
	ENG 204	Great Books of the Western World	3
	ART/MUS/TH 214	Fine and Performing Arts (choose one)	3
AREA III:	CST 230	Comparative Studies Non-Western Literature	3
	RST 260***-290	Regional Studies (Non-Western)	3
AREA IV:	PSY 105	Psychology	4
SOC/PLS/EC 200		Social, Political, Economic Life	9
Natural Sciences* (listed below)			

FOUNDATION CURRICULUM CONTENT		76 qtr cr hr
COM 103	Communication for Teachers	3
COM 152	Mass Communication**	3
SM 145	Foundations in Scientific Literacy and Problem Solving	3
PHY 245	Concepts in Physics*	4.5
CHM 245	Concepts in Chemistry*	4.5
BIO 345	Concepts in Biology*	4.5
GL 345	Concepts in Geology*	4.5
ENG 340	Language for Teachers	4
ENG 342	Advanced Composition for Teachers	3
GEO 201/202 or 203	Principles of Physical/Cultural/Economic Geography	3
HPR 281	Physical Education for the Middle Childhood Level	4
HED 331	Personal Health for Educators	4
HPR 260	First Aid	3
HST 211 & 212	American Civilization	6
MTH 243 & 244	Fundamentals of Mathematics I and II	8

EDT	280	Classroom Applications of Computer-Based Technology	3
MUS	365	Methods and Materials for Teaching General Music**	4
AED	431	Art and the Child**	4
ED	421	Literature for Middle Childhood **	3

*Meets general education requirements for Middle Childhood Level education students

** or appropriate course substitution

*** Social Studies concentration requires students to select RST 260

Subject Area Concentration (Choose Two of the Four) (Total 49-52 hrs.)

English/Language Arts Concentration: (In addition to 17-27 hrs. above) (26)

ENG 205	Afro-American Literature	3
ENG 346	Reading Workshop	3
ENG 345	Writing Workshop	4
Or/ENG 343	Advanced Composition	
Or/ENG 476	Rhetoric	
ENG 355	Earlier 19th Century	8
&/or/ENG 356	Later 19th Century	
&/or/ENG 357	20th Century	
ENG 483	Sociolinguistics	4
Or/ENG 485	Studies in English Education	
COM 365	Issues in Mass Communication**	4

**or appropriate course substitution

Social Studies: (In addition to 15 hrs. above) (25)

HST 218 or 219	Ohio history coursework 3
HST 214 or 215	African-American history 3
HST 470 or 475 or 480 or 485	U.S. history 4
HST 445 or 455 or 465	non-Western History 4
PLS 212 or 222 or 322 or 331 or 340 or 351 or 371	Government 4
GEO 149 or 201 or 202 or 203	Map Study or Geography 3

plus any 4 or more additional hours from the following: GEO 325 or 370 or 375 or EC 201 or 202 or 203; or other appropriate history, and/or social studies course. 4

Mathematics: (In addition to the 12 hours above) (24)

MTH 343	Algebra and Functions	4
MTH 344	Problem Solving	4
MTH 345	Geometry	4
MTH 348	Concepts in Calculus	4
MTH 446	Math. Modeling	4
STT 342	Probability and Statistics	4

Science: (In addition to 21 hrs. above) (346 Science courses being developed (24)
Students need to take 4 hours in each discipline. When possible students must take the courses designated for middle level science plus SM 445 and appropriate elective.

Chemistry	CHM 345	Concepts in Chemistry II	4.5
Physics	PHY 346	Concepts/Applications in Physics II	4.5
Biology	BIO 346	Concepts in Biology II	4.5
Geology	GL 346	Concepts in Geology II	4.5
	SM 445	Projects in Science	3
	SM 446	Projects in Science II	3

Pre-Professional Education **15 hrs.**

ED 301 Schooling in a Pluralistic Society: The Middle Childhood Level Perspective (5)
ED 221 Practicum I - (in Middle Childhood Level) (1)

ED 303 Intro to Psychological Foundations of Educ: The Middle Level Learner (5)
ED 223 Practicum II- (in Middle Childhood Level) (1)
EDS 333 Learning Differences: Introduction (3)

TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE WITHOUT LICENSURE **
T = 185 - 188 HRS.

(* *This degree meets the new requirements for TWO areas of concentration and 8 hours of the new mandated emphasis on phonics/reading. The remaining hours of the mandate will be taken during the Licensure work at the graduate level following completion of this degree.

Middle Childhood Graduate Level Program

Course Credit Assignments

4/14/99 Approved by the Teacher Education Department – revised 1/08/02

Phase One

Term 1*

ED 602 (4) Education In a Pluralistic Society: Middle Childhood Perspective
ED 621 (4) Human Development and Learning: Middle Childhood Perspective
EDS 624 (4) Addressing Learning Differences
ED 612 (1) Practicum I: Middle Childhood Level
Total hours: 13
* Courses needed if not taken as an undergraduate

Phase Two

Term 2

ED 732 (3) Principles and Practices of Middle Childhood Level Education
ED 645 (4.5) Reading & Literacy Instruction I: Middle Childhood Level
ED 622 (3) Technological Instruction & Integrated Methods: Middle Level
ED 612 (1) Practicum I: Middle Childhood Level (continued)
Total hours: 11.5

Term 3

ED 600 (3) Classroom Management: Middle Childhood Level
ED 717 (4.5) Word Study: Phonics Middle Level

Plus Methods Courses-Choose 2

ED 636 (3) Integrated Middle Childhood Level Science Methods &/or
ED 610 (3) Middle Childhood Mathematics Methods
ED 624 (3) Middle Childhood Literature, Speech, and Drama &/or
ED 629 (3) Middle School Social Studies Methods (3 X 2) = 6 hrs.
ED 614 (1) Practicum II: Middle Childhood Level
Total hours: 14.5

Term 4

ED 709 (4.5) Diagnosis & Assessment of Reading Performance
ED 645 (3) Inquiry & Assessment: Middle Childhood Level
ED 607 (4.5) Reading & Literacy Instruction II: Middle Level
ED 616 (1) Practicum III: Middle Childhood Level
Total hours: 13

Phase Three

Term 5

ED 641-12- Internship/Seminar: Middle Childhood Level (Student Teaching)
Total hours: 12

51-62 Graduate Hours to Receive Licensure
To complete M. Ed.:
Summer II
ED 646-3-Inquiry and Prospectus
ED 771-1-Inquiry Project Completion
Total M. Ed. Program Hours if Graduate Phase I is needed = 65
Total M. Ed Program Hours if Graduate Phase I is not needed = 52

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